

# The Honor of the Big Snows

By James Oliver Curwood

(Continued.)

"Yes, the heart of Jan Thoreau is broken," he cried. "But it has been broken by nothing that lives on the Nelson House trail. It is broken because of you."

"I did not say that," interrupted Jean. "I say that it is broken because of you. If only I might tell you!"

"Do—do, Jean! Please tell me!" She put her hands on his shoulders. Her eyes implored him. "Tell me what I have done—what can I do, Jean?"

"I can say that much to you, and no more," he said quietly. "Only know this, my dear—that there is a great grief eating at the soul of Jan Thoreau, and that because of this grief he is changed. I know what that grief is, but I am pledged never to reveal it. It is for you to find out, and to do this, above all else, let him know that you love him. Not as a sister any longer, Melisse, but as a woman!"

Gravels did not stay to see the effect of his last words. Cummins and Jan came in together at supper time. The factor was in high humor. An Indian from the Porcupine had brought in two silver foxes that morning, and he was immensely pleased at Jan's return, a combination of incidents which put him in the best of moods.

Melisse sat opposite Jan at the table. She had twisted a sprig of red hake into her glossy braid, and a cluster of it nestled at her throat, but Jan gave no sign that he had noticed this little favor, which was meant entirely for him.

"Has MacVeigh put in his new trap line?" Cummins inquired after asking Jan many questions about his trip.

"I don't know," replied Jan. "I didn't go to MacVeigh's."

Purposely he held his eyes from Melisse. She understood his effort, and a quick flush gathered in her cheeks.

"It was MacVeigh who brought in word of you."

"I met him in the Cree lake country, but he said nothing of his trap lines."

He rose from the table with Cummins and started to follow him from the cabin. Melisse came between. For a moment her hand rested upon his arm.

"You are going to stay with me, Jan," she smiled. "I want your help with the dishes, and then we're going to play on the violin."

She pulled him into a chair as Cummins left and tied an apron about his shoulders.

"Close your eyes and don't move," she commanded, laughing into his surprised face as she ran into her room.

A moment later she returned with one hand held behind her back. There came the snap of scissors and a little nervous laugh close to his head.

"It's terribly long, Jan!" Her soft hands brushed his bearded cheeks.

"Eh?" she shuddered. "You must take that off your face. If you don't—"

"Why?" he asked through lack of anything else to say.

She lowered her head until her cheek pressed against his own.

"Because it feels like bristles," she whispered.

She reddened fiercely when he remained silent, and the scissors snipped more rapidly between her fingers.

"I'm going to prospect the big swamp along the edge of the Barrens this summer," he explained soon, laughing to relieve the tension. "A beard will protect me from the black flies."

"You can grow another!"

She took the apron from about his shoulders and held it so that he could see the result of her work. He looked up, smiling.

"Thank you, Melisse."



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dered listlessly from one thing to another, and after a few minutes gave her the instrument again.

Without speaking, she rose from her chair and hung the violin upon the wall.

"You must practice a great deal," she said quietly.

At her movement, he too, rose from his seat, and when she turned to him again he had his cap in his hand. A flash of surprise shot into her eyes.

"Are you going so soon, Jan?"

"I am tired," he said in excuse. "It has been two days since I have slept, Melisse. Good night!"

He smiled at her from the door, but the "Good night" which fell from her lips was lifeless and unmeaning. Jan shivered when he went out. Under the cold stars he clinched his hands, knowing that he had come from the cabin none too soon.

It was late when Cummins returned home. Melisse was still up. He looked at her sharply over his shoulder as he hung up his coat and hat.

"Has anything come between you and Jan?" he asked suddenly. "Why have you been crying?"

"Sometimes the tears come when I am playing the violin, father. I know of nothing that has come between Jan and me, only I—I don't understand!"

She stopped, struggling hard to keep back the sobs that were trembling in her throat.

"Neither do I understand," exclaimed the factor, going to the stove to light his pipe. "He gave me his resignation as a paid servant of the company tonight!"

"He is not going to leave—the post?"

"He is leaving the service," reiterated her father. "That means he can not long live at Lac Bain. He says he is going into the woods, perhaps into Jean's country of the Athabasca. Has he told you more?"

"Nothing," said Melisse.

The next day it was Croisset who went along the edge of the Barrens

for meat. Gravels found Jan filling a new shoulder pack with supplies. It was their first encounter since he had learned that Jan had given up the service.

"I say, M. Jan Thoreau!" he fairly hissed.

Jan looked up, smiling, to see the little Frenchman fairly quivering with rage.

"Good morning, M. Jean de Gravels!" he laughed back. "You see I am going out among the foxes. I am tired of the post. I can make better wage for my time in the swamps to the west."

Jean's thin lips were almost snarling. "Blessed saints, and it was I who!"

He spun upon his heels without another word and went straight to Melisse.

"Jan Thoreau is going to leave the post," he announced fiercely, throwing out his chest and glaring at her accusingly.

"So father has told me," said Melisse.

Her cheeks were colorless and there were purplish lines under her eyes, but she spoke with exceeding calm-

ness.

"Well," exclaimed Jean, whirling again, "you take it coolly!"

A little later Melisse saw Jan coming from the store. When he entered the cabin his dark face betrayed the strain under which he was laboring, but his voice was unnaturally calm.

"I have come to say goodbye, Melisse," he said. "I am going to prospect for a good trap line among the Barrens."

"I hope you will have good luck, Jan."

In her voice too, was a firmness almost metallic.

"Will you wait a moment?" she asked.

She hurried into her room, and scarcely had she gone before she reappeared again, this time with a flush burning in her cheeks and her eyes shining brightly. She had unbraided her hair, and it lay coiled upon the crown of her head, glistening with crimson sprigs of hake. She came to him a second time and once more gave him her hand.

"I don't suppose you care now," she said coldly, and yet laughing in his face. "I have not broken my promise. It was silly, wasn't it?"

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He felt as if his blood had been suddenly chilled to water, and he fought to choke back the thick throbbing in his throat.

"You promised!" He could not go further.

"I promised that I would not do up my hair again until you had forgotten to love me," she flushed for him. "I will do it up now."

"I have not forgotten to love you, Melisse. I shall never cease to love my little sister. But you are older now, and it is time for you to do up your hair."

He turned without looking at her again, leaving her standing with her arms still half stretched out to him, and went from the cabin.

"Goodby, Jan!"

The words fell in a sobbing whisper from her, but he had gone too far to hear.

## CHAPTER XII.

### Jan Returns.

ALL that spring and summer Jan spent in the thick caribou swamps and low ridge mountains along the Barrens. It was two months before he appeared at the post again, and then he remained only long enough to patch himself up and secure fresh supplies.

Melisse had suffered quietly during these two months, a grief and loneliness filling her heart which none knew but herself. Even from Iowa she kept her unhappiness a secret, and yet when the gloom had settled heavily upon her she was still buoyed up by a persistent hope. Until Jan's last visit to Lac Bain this hope never quite went out.

The first evening after his arrival from the swamps to the west he came to the cabin. His beard had grown again. His hair was long and shaggy and fell in shining dishevelment upon his shoulders. The sensitive beauty of his great eyes, once responsive to every passing humor in Melisse, flashing fun at her laughter, glowing softly in their devotion, was gone.

This time Melisse knew that there was left not even the last comforting spark of hope within her bosom. Jan had gone out of her life forever, leaving to her as a haunting ghost of what they two had once been to each other the old violin on the cabin wall.

After he went away again the violin became more and more to her what it had once been to him. She played it as he had played it, sobbing her loneliness and her heart break through its strings, in lone hours clasping it to her breast and speaking to it as Jan had talked to it in years gone by.

Once during the autumn Jan came in for supplies and traps and his dogs and sleds. He was planning to spend the winter 200 miles to the west, in the country of the Athabasca. He was at Lac Bain for a week, and during this time a mail runner came in from Fort Churchill.

The runner brought a new experience into the life of Melisse—her first letter. It was from young Dixon—twenty or more closely written pages of it, in which he informed her that he was going to spend a part of the approaching winter at Lac Bain.

She was reading the last page when Jan came into the cabin. Her cheeks were slightly flushed by this new excitement, which was reflected in her eyes as she looked at Jan.

"A letter!" she cried, holding out her two hands filled with the pages. "A letter to me, Jan, all the way from Fort Churchill!"

"Who in the world?" he began, smiling at her, and stopped.

"It's from Mr. Dixon," she said, the flush deepening in her cheeks. "He's going to spend part of the winter with us."

"I'm glad of that, Melisse," said Jan quietly. "I like him and would like to know him better."

He did not see her again until six months later, when he came in with the caribou roasts with his furs. Then he learned that another letter had come to Melisse and that Dixon had gone to London instead of coming to Lac Bain.

The day after the carnival he went back into the country of the Athabasca. Spring did not see him at Lac Bain. Early summer brought no news of him. In the floods Jean went by the waterway to the Athabasca and found Thoreau's cabin abandoned. There had not been life in it for a long time. The Indians said that since the carnival they had not

seen him.

(To Be Continued.)

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## DUTCH PEOPLE CELEBRATE BIRTHDAY OF THE QUEEN.

In the little land of windmills and wooden shoes today is a national holiday, for it is the thirty-second birthday of Her Most Gracious Majesty Wilhelmina, Queen of the Netherlands and Princess of Orange-Nassau. In The Hague, that fortress of peace, and in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and all the other "dams" of that profane country, the day will be given over to merry-making and festivities, and for the moment the subjects of the little Queen will forget the grim spectre of Germany that threatens to gobble 'em up if they don't look out. Wilhelmina and her little daughter, the Princess Juliana, now "free years old," are the last descendants of a race of royal heroes and heroines, the main branch of the sturdy trunk of Orange.

Queen Wilhelmina was born Aug. 31, 1880, the daughter of the late King William III, and Emma, daughter of Prince George Victor of Waldeck-Pyrmont. She married the Prince of Mecklenburg-Schwerin in 1901. Eight years passed without the arrival of the stork at the Dutch royal palace, and the Queen, who is almost in despair of an heir to defend the tottering throne against the envious German Empire, when little Juliana was born, and the Dutch people have become reconciled to the baby Princess as being a popular favorite.

Wilhelmina's father, the late King William, died when she was ten and her mother, Queen Emma, Regent Emma, ruled until Wilhelmina attained her eighteenth birthday. The inaugural ceremonies were held in the palace at The Hague, and with the exception of newspapermen, none but native Dutchmen were admitted. It is said that Lord Rosebery disguised himself as a bricklayer in order to get into the church, and numerous other foreigners adopted similar methods in order to see the coronation of the fair young Queen.

In the early days of her rule the Queen had a somewhat exaggerated idea of her own importance. A few days after the coronation, it is related, and while attending one of the royal receptions, she happened to drop her bouquet. The Queen looked fixedly and meaningfully at her mother, and the Queen, on these occasions, stood by her picked up the flowers. Wilhelmina was Queen, and it was evident that she did not intend to permit even her mother to forget it.

Queen Wilhelmina usually spends the summer months at the palace of Lee, a hideous structure built in the worst style of a century ago, but surrounded by a magnificent park that has few equals for beauty in Europe. It has been reported that the Queen and her husband are given to differences of opinion of a most decided nature, but these rumors of quarreling in the royal palace have been official denials.

The Dutch ruler is very much an out-of-door woman, and spends as much as possible of her time in the open. On these excursions she wears hats or gloves, and only when it is very hot protects her face against the rays of the sun with a parasol.

It is a coincidence that the birthday of the Queen of Holland is the same as that of the new Mikado of Japan, who was born on the last day of August, 1879, and is thus just a year older than the fair ruler of the Dutch.

## SOME SIGNS OF FALL.

Cool Weather Makes the Farmer Folks Apprehensive.

A his straw hat and likewise the lightweight overcoat. In the latter through financial reasons, is out of your reach get any sort of an overcoat, because the weather will demand it. Nobody knows just when the weather has changed from 90 early in the week to 50 or possibly less. A disquieting feature of the situation is that the weather is apparently getting the cold wave habit, and if it holds over into September, the killing frost that farmers dread will come early and cause great damage.

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## REPORT JEFFERSON FOR ANNUAL OUTING

The Bridgeport Business Men's association will hold its annual outing Wednesday afternoon, at Port Jefferson, and has planned a trip to that beautiful Long Island town on the steamer Park City, leaving Bridgeport at 12:10 o'clock sharp. The return trip will be made at 4:30 o'clock, arriving in Bridgeport at 6 o'clock.

The Wheeler & Wilson band will accompany them. The entertainment committee has promised some surprises during the trip and while taking of Barker's celebrated barrel of champagne which will be served immediately upon arrival at Port Jefferson.

The total cost of this outing and see food and drink for each member or friend is \$2.00 and tickets will be on sale at the office of the secretary and the stores of R. T. Whiting, K. L. Davis, H. H. Jackson, G. R. Rock, Davis & Hawley Co., Bridgeport Trust Co., M. W. Manwaring, W. T. Whitcomb, Lyford Bros., J. D. Hartigan.

In order that the proper amount of food be prepared and good service rendered to each individual, the number to attend must be known in advance, and it is therefore agreed by the committee that the sale of tickets will positively close September 9, 1912. It is up to you not to miss this opportunity to enjoy yourself. Buy your ticket at once or send check to our secretary and he will send ticket by return mail.

Many Port Jefferson people come often to Bridgeport and they are much interested in this proposed visit of the Business Men. Let us enjoy their hospitality to our mutual advantage.

These are the various committees for the outing:

General committee, Hon. Edward T. Buckingham, chairman; George R. Burnes, secretary; George E. Crawford, H. H. Jackson, G. R. Rock, F. Wheeler, R. T. Whiting, Carl Reck, Philip L. Holzer, James Peeley, Joseph D. Hartigan.

## CENTENNIAL OF BIRTH OF WILLIAM TAPPAN THOMPSON

It is to be feared that the present generation will be unable to extract even a glimmer from a mention of the name of William Tappan Thompson, and it is likely the exact of this story the centennial of his birth, which falls to-day, would pass unnoticed. Yet half a century ago Mr. Thompson was one of the greatest and most popular of American humorists, and his name ranked high among those of professional funny-men. In addition to his humorous work, he was an able journalist. Before the civil war he was the editor of the Western Continent, a Baltimore illustrated weekly. Shortly before the beginning of the strife between North and South he settled in Savannah, where he was one of the founders of the Savannah Morning News, now one of the leading newspapers of the South. For over thirty years, until his death in 1882, he continued to be the editor and general manager of that paper.

William Tappan Thompson was born in Ravenna, Ohio, Aug. 31, 1812. His father was a native Virginian and his mother an Irishwoman. Young Thompson began his newspaper career at the age of twenty as a printer's apprentice in the office of the old Philadelphia Chronicle. After a brief experience as private secretary to a Philadelphia politician he returned to the city, working in the office of the Augusta, Ga., Sentinel. After two years' service in the Sentinel he was sent to the Atlanta, Ga., Mirror, but it was soon broken. Then he went to the Madison Miscellany, for which he wrote the first of the funny yarns which were one of the "six best sellers" of its day. Printing presses were kept running day and night to supply the demand for the book, which, from every city and village of the United States and Canada, and a London edition also had an enormous run. Writing a rolling yarn, the experience of Major Jones were hilarious and mirth-inspiring without being gross or vulgar. Mr. Thompson said the copyright of "Major Jones' Courtship" for \$250 to a Philadelphia publishing house, which reaped a golden harvest from the deal. Later the author wrote "Major Jones' Sketches of Travel" and "The Chronicles of Pineville," which were fairly successful. He produced, a farce entitled "The Live Indian," and a dramatization of "The Vicar of Wakefield."

After going to Baltimore in 1853 Mr. Thompson wrote little of a humorous nature, and devoted his time to serious journalism. During the civil war Mr. Thompson was an aid to Gov. Brown of Georgia, and a staunch defender of the Confederate cause. For over thirty years he was one of the leading and most influential of Savannah's citizens, but never held political office, except that he was a member of the Georgia Constitutional convention in 1877.

In the church calendar, to-day is set aside in honor of St. Isabel, who died in 1279, and St. Adrian, who was bishop of Lindisfarne in the seventh century.

## A LABOR DAY SERMON.

At the First Methodist Church tomorrow evening, the pastor, George M. Brown, will deliver the subject, "The Workingman's Wage," a topic which is appropriate to Labor Day. One of the questions to be discussed is: How can a man live on the average wage at the present cost of the necessities of life? The quartet has returned from vacation and will furnish the music during the day. Eugene L. Hebbard, bass, has been secured in the place of Clarence Mills, resigned.

## GIRL JOCKEY'S NEXT.

London, Aug. 31—A Budapest dispatch says that a daughter of Jockey Bulford has applied for a license from the Jockey Club.

Pauline Bulford has been fully trained as a jockey, and intends to begin her career soon on the turf. This will have been the first occasion, the newspapers say, on which a woman has ridden as a professional jockey.

## STEPHENSON WILL LIVE.

Senator's Condition Not So Serious As At First Reported.

Milwaukee, Aug. 31—A dispatch from Marinette, Wis., received in this city yesterday, says that the condition of United States Senator Isaac Stephenson, who was taken ill Thursday while on fishing trip near Escanaba, is not so serious as at first supposed.

Relatives of the Senator received word yesterday afternoon that the Senator had suffered an attack of indigestion. His companions thought it best to send for a physician. The Senator recovered in a short time and will continue on his fishing trip.

## PATENTS.

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